

presents a corresponding tactilely perceptible key zone for each of a plurality of said discrete keys.

5. The adaptive display screen of claim 4, wherein each tactilely perceptible key zone has substantially the same shape.

6. The adaptive display screen of claim 4, wherein said shape changing, exposed upper surface constitutes an upper portion of a shape-adaptive overlay to said adaptive display.

7. The adaptive display screen of claim 6, wherein said shape-adaptive overlay comprises a plurality of size-alterable zones that change the shape of said exposed upper surface in dependence upon a microprocessor-controlled volumetric change of at least one of said size-alterable zones.

8. The adaptive display screen of claim 7, wherein a size-alterable zone located above at least one of the visibly defined key zones is expanded thereby establishing a tactilely perceptible convex area on the shape changing, exposed upper surface that physically signifies the respective overlaid visible key zone.

9. The adaptive display screen of claim 8, wherein said tactilely perceptible convex area is centered within one of the visibly defined key zones.

10. The adaptive display screen of claim 7, wherein a size-alterable zone located above at least one of the visibly defined key zones is contracted thereby establishing a tactilely perceptible concave area on the shape changing, exposed upper surface that physically signifies the respective overlaid visible key zone.

11. The adaptive display screen of claim 7, wherein a size-alterable zone located above at least one of the visibly defined key zones comprises electrically responsive media that changes volume when electrically stimulated.

12. The adaptive display screen of claim 11, wherein said electrically responsive media is confined within a pocket formed in a flexible sheet upon which said shape changing, exposed upper surface is established.

13. The adaptive display screen of claim 11, wherein said electrically responsive media is a gas confined within the pocket formed in said flexible sheet upon which said shape changing, exposed upper surface is established.

14. The adaptive display screen of claim 11, wherein said electrically responsive media is a fluid confined within the pocket formed in said flexible sheet upon which said shape changing, exposed upper surface is established.

15. The adaptive display screen of claim 14, wherein said flexible sheet is composed of substantially transparent material thereby accommodating visualization of said adaptive display therethrough.

16. The adaptive display screen of claim 11, wherein said electrically responsive media is a solid.

17. A method for changing the shape of an upper surface on an adaptive display which is configured for incorporation on a multi-mode, microprocessor-controlled wireless handheld communication device having capabilities for at least voice and email modes of communication, said method comprising:

displaying visibly different key arrangements on an adaptively display in dependence upon the mode of operation of a wireless handheld communication device;  
 adapting a shape of an exposed upper surface of the adaptive display in dependence upon the displayed key arrangement.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein each visibly different key arrangement presents a plurality of discrete keys that each

visibly define a two-dimensional signified key zone that establishes a target area for press-engagement and said exposed upper surface presents a corresponding tactilely perceptible key zone for each of a plurality of said discrete keys.

19. A processing subsystem configured to be installed in a handheld communication device, having capabilities for at least voice and email modes of communication, comprising an adaptive display with a shape-changing upper surface, said processing subsystem comprising:

operating system software that controls operation of an incorporating handheld communication device, said operating software is configured: to transmit signals to a visual display that variously presents visibly different key arrangements in dependence upon the mode of operation of the incorporating device and to change the shape of a shape changing, exposed upper surface in dependence upon the presented key arrangements.

20. A handheld electronic device capable of voice and email communication comprising:

a body having a front face;

an adaptive display screen comprising a visual display that variously presents visibly different key arrangements to an operator of the device in dependence upon the mode of operation of the incorporating device and a shape changing, exposed upper surface presented to the operator for selective digital press-engagement, said exposed upper surface changing shape in dependence upon the presented key arrangement.

21. The handheld electronic device of claim 20, further comprising a display presented key arrangement taking the form of one of the following: a navigational key arrangement, a text entry key arrangement, a symbol entry key arrangement, and a numeric entry key arrangement.

22. The handheld electronic device of claim 20, wherein the variously presentable visibly different key arrangements comprise: a navigational key arrangement, a text entry key arrangement, a symbol entry key arrangement, and a numeric entry key arrangement.

23. The handheld electronic device of claim 20, wherein each visibly different key arrangement presents a plurality of discrete keys that each visibly define a two-dimensional signified key zone that establishes a target area for press-engagement and said shape changing, exposed upper surface presents a corresponding tactilely perceptible key zone for each of a plurality of said discrete keys.

24. The handheld electronic device of claim 23, wherein each tactilely perceptible key zone has substantially the same shape.

25. The handheld electronic device of claim 23, wherein said shape changing, exposed upper surface constitutes an upper portion of a shape-adaptive overlay to said adaptive display.

26. The handheld electronic device of claim 25, wherein said shape-adaptive overlay comprises a plurality of size-alterable zones that change the shape of said exposed upper surface in dependence upon a microprocessor-controlled volumetric change of at least one of said size-alterable zones.

27. The handheld electronic device of claim 26, wherein a size-alterable zone located above at least one of the visibly defined key zones is expanded thereby establishing a tactilely perceptible convex area on the shape changing, exposed upper surface that physically signifies the respective overlaid visible key zone.